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Central Intelligence Agency
Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence

19 November 1986

(b)(3) NOTE TO: [redacted]

(b)(3) South Asia Division/NESA

I would like to send this, or a version of it, to General Watrous, CINCPAC J-2. He
(b)(3) raised this subject with me last week. Please [redacted] put it into message form, from me. Also, you might consider sending this [redacted]

(b)(1) [redacted]

/S/

Richard J. Kerr
Deputy Director for Intelligence

ادارة التحليل لشؤون الشرق الاوسط و جنوب آسيا
הכחלקה לענייני המזרח התיכון ודרום אסיה
اداره تجزيه و تحليل خاور ميانه و جنوب آسيا

Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis
Directorate of Intelligence

NOTE FOR: Deputy Director of Intelligence

The NIO for warning probably will bring up the Indian Army Exercise during your meeting with the DCI this morning. The attached paper provides background information on the exercise, (b)(1) [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

South Asia Division/NESA (b)(3)

Attached:
As stated

20 November 1986 (b)(3)

[redacted]

This note is classified ~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~ [redacted]

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Indian Army Exercises

The Indian Army will begin its largest ever field maneuvers in January near the Pakistani border. Although the size of this exercise--codenamed BRASS TACKS IV--is unprecedented, we believe the exercise fits the Indian Army's standard annual training cycle, is well designed to meet the new Chief of Staff's goal of challenging the conservative thinking of his senior officers, and is not a prelude to war. (b)(1)

Despite some Pakistani concern over the exercise, senior Pakistani officials are downplaying an imminent attack. Instead Islamabad appears to be using BRASS TACKS IV to strengthen its case for increased US military support. (b)(3)

The BRASS TACKS Exercises

BRASS TACKS IV will be the final sequence in a series of four exercises that began last summer. BRASS TACKS I and II were conducted in July and November as command post exercises designed to test the administrative, communication, and logistics skills of senior Indian Army commanders, (b)(1) We believe that BRASS TACKS III will consist of division level maneuvers held sometime in December in preparation for BRASS TACKS IV in January. (b)(3)

(b)(1) BRASS TACKS IV will take place in the first three months of 1987 in India's northern Rajasthan training area. The exercise will involve two opposing corps level forces--including the Army's two armored divisions and its single mechanized division--consisting of about 150,000 troops, 1,500 tanks, and 500 artillery pieces. The Indian Air Force and Navy will be conducting exercises simultaneously with BRASS TACKS IV, including air support missions in Rajasthan and an amphibious landing near Goa. (b)(3)

Indian Intentions

BRASS TACKS IV fits the Indian Army's standard annual training cycle. The Army normally concludes its training cycle in the months of January and February with corps or multicorps exercises in Rajasthan. In 1982 and 1984, these maneuvers involved about 100,000 men, including the Army's newly formed mechanized division in 1984. The Indians also routinely prioritize rail traffic in the Punjab, the major transit route between most Army units and the Rajasthan training area, for military needs in the weeks preceding their large-scale maneuvers. There was a brief exercise related disruption of Punjab rail traffic earlier this month, but (b)(1) most of this traffic already has been resumed. This disruption caused a stir in the

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press, where it was misinterpreted to mean the Indians already had begun large-scale troop movements in the Punjab. We believe the Army will begin to use Punjab rail lines on a prolonged basis next month to move military units. (b)(3)

In our judgment, BRASS TACKS IV is designed to meet the new Chief of Staff's goal of challenging the conservative thinking of his senior officers. Upon assuming the Chief of Staff's position last February (b)(1) Gen. Sundarji has begun making major efforts to develop the skills of his officers, especially division and corps commanders, to keep pace with the requirements of the expanding and modernizing Indian Army. We believe involving the mechanized division and both armored divisions in BRASS TACKS IV is designed primarily to confront its participants, experienced mainly in infantry operations, with the rigors of armored warfare. (b)(3)

War?

The preponderance of evidence so far indicates the BRASS TACKS exercises are not a prelude to war. The Rajasthan training area is about 400km south of the more traditional Indian invasion routes into Pakistan and, in a defensive scenario, 600km south of the most likely Pakistani area of attack in Kashmir. An Indian attack on Pakistan from Rajasthan would require Indian forces to cross the widest stretch of desert between the two countries where few roads exist. So far, an insufficient number of air defense and field artillery units are being deployed to support combat operations and no forward consolidation of ammunition, fuel, or other supplies is being made. (b)(3)

Pakistani Reaction

There is some concern in Islamabad, mainly in military circles, over the Indian exercises (b)(1) its size, its high concentration of armor, and the fact that New Delhi has yet to notify Islamabad officially of its scheduling. Some Pakistani Army units--including its two armored divisions--are deploying now for their annual exercises opposite the Rajasthan training area and in Kashmir. (b)(1) these deployments consistent with the normal training cycle and (b)(1) many border observation posts are unmanned. (b)(3)

high level Pakistani officials acknowlege they do (b)(1) not believe India will launch an attack. Recent press statements by President Zia downplay the threat to Pakistan, saying that there is no indication of an attack. Travel plans of senior officials, including the Prime Minister's scheduled trip to China and the Chief of Staff's present visit to the US, have not been altered. We believe the concern expressed by some Pakistanis over BRASS TACKS is for propaganda purposes and to strengthen Islamabad's case for increased US military assistance. We believe New Delhi will follow previous

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practice and inform Islamabad about BRASS TACKS IV shortly before its beginning in January. [redacted] (b)(3)

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